

Pollution Prevention Practices in Auto Body and Paint Shops

Health and Safety Resources

Automotive body and refinishing workers have the potential to be exposed to many hazards. Chemical hazards may include sanding dusts containing metals, solvents, paints and cleaners. Physical hazards may include cutting and sanding tools, noise, repetitive stress, and uneven or slippery floor surfaces. Employers and workers benefit from integrating health and safety practices into the workplace. Implementing effective health and safety programs can reduce the risk of employee accidents, save money and improve employee morale.

Both employers and workers have roles in eliminating potential hazards to keep their workplace safe. The resources in this fact sheet contain information to explain regulatory requirements, define worker and employer responsibilities, and show how to practice health and safety as part of daily work routines. The guidance is available on-line as well as paper copies that you can request from the appropriate agency. For more information, contact the agency; phone numbers and web sites are listed at the end of this fact sheet.

State and Federal Worker Safety and Health Programs

California operates its own job safety and health program. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) approves, monitors and provides partial funding for the state program implemented by the [Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health](#) (Cal/OSHA.)

Federal and state programs have useful information for auto body employers and workers. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([OSHA auto body page](#)) includes health and safety topics, shop examples, and resource lists.

Worker and Employer Roles and Responsibilities

Workers are responsible for following site safety rules, attending training, wearing personal protective equipment when needed, and maintaining a safe work area. Workers can eliminate or reduce possible exposures to hazardous chemicals by following [safe work practices](#) for each shop task they do. Employers are responsible for maintaining a safe work place, including providing information, training and equipment to workers to prevent injury and illness.

Hazard Communication and Material Safety Data Sheets

Workers need to identify and understand the hazards of the chemicals they work with such as paints, thinners, and cleaning solvents. Employers are required to provide worker training on how to find, read and understand Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and product labels. Employees are responsible for reading and

understanding the MSDS for the products they use. An on-line resource from University of Missouri, [Understanding MSDS](#), explains how to use the MSDS. MSDS for products that you use should be provided by your vendor. There are on-line resources where you can search for product or chemical MSDS. The MSDS Search web site allows you to choose from many [MSDS databases](#) maintained by universities, manufacturers and government agencies. The Kansas State University site provides links to [find MSDS](#) on-line.

Working safely around chemical hazards- more information

In addition to MSDS, there are other sources of information on chemical hazards. The Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service (HESIS) provides information on some specific chemical hazards in auto body and paint shops. [HESIS](#) is a joint program by the state Department of Health Services and the Department of Industrial Relations that provides current information to workers, employers and others about workplace chemical hazards. Fact sheets summarizing health effects and how to protect your health are available for the following chemical compounds typically found in auto body and paint shops:

[Isocyanates](#) (found in 2-part coatings)

[Methylene Chloride](#) (may be found in cleaners and paint removers)

[Toluene](#) (may be found in coatings and thinners)

[Xylene](#) (may be found in coatings and thinners)

The HESIS web site has guidance on [Using solvents safely](#) and [Aerosol cleaner use in auto repair](#).

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is a federal agency that helps assure safe and healthful working conditions. They conduct research and provide information, education, and training in workplace safety and health. [NIOSH](#) provides information on many health and safety topics including information on several hundred chemicals found in the workplace in the [NIOSH pocket guide](#). The guide provides key information to help users recognize and protect themselves from workplace chemical hazards.

Where to Find Resources - Employers

Employers are required to have programs for employees to prevent illness and injury on the job. Everyone benefits from work place safety and health training. Effective workplace health and safety programs result in fewer worker accidents and illnesses which reduces costs for employers. The California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) provides a [Guide to Developing Your Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention Program](#) to help employers provide a safe workplace and reduce losses from accidents and illnesses.

US EPA Design for Environment (DfE) Automotive Refinishing Partnership has worked with refinishing shops to develop helpful checklists and guidance

documents. A general [health and safety checklist](#) for the auto body shop is available from DfE.

Develop a worker training program

Safety and health training is one of the most important parts of your Injury and Illness Prevention Program. [OSHA's small business training topics](#) can be used to develop a worker training program. Topics include personal protective equipment, flammable liquids, lockout/tagout, and emergency response. Materials include instruction guides, student handouts, and [self-inspection checklists](#) for each training topic.

Keep employees alert to work-related accidents and illnesses

[Set up tailgate/toolbox safety meetings](#) as part of your Injury and Illness Prevention program. Tailgate safety meetings are regularly scheduled, short meetings that can be used to address actual health and safety concerns in the shop and current industry safety topics.

Hazard communication

All California employers, regardless of size, whose employees may be exposed to hazardous substances such as automotive paint, solvent and thinner products are required to have a written Hazard Communication Plan. Cal/OSHA enforces Hazard Communication regulations in California and provides a [Guide to the California Hazard Communication Regulation](#) and [on-site assistance](#) to help businesses implement the required programs.

Waste management training

Almost all auto body shops generate hazardous waste and their employees are required to be trained in proper waste handling and emergency procedures. Most shops generate less than 1000 kg/month (about 2200 lbs/month) and are required to ensure that employees have knowledge of proper waste handling and emergency procedures. Shops that generate more than 1000 kg/month have additional requirements including employee training and recordkeeping. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) [Hazardous Waste Generator Requirements](#) fact sheet includes information on worker training requirements (section F, page 5.)

Respiratory protection and training

Sanding and painting are shop activities that require workers to wear respiratory protection. Employers need to be familiar with the requirements in the [respirator regulation](#), including program administration, employee medical testing, annual fit testing, training, and other requirements. Cal/OSHA enforces the regulation and provides an overview of how to set up a [workplace respiratory protection program](#).

The [DfE Respiratory Protection Program For Auto Refinishing](#), is a template of a program that you can use to develop a respiratory protection program for your refinishing shop.

Safety and Health Agencies

OSHA	http://www.osha.gov	800-321-6742
Cal/OSHA	http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh	510-286-7000
NIOSH	http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html	800-356-4674

Hazardous Waste Regulatory Requirements

For information on regulatory requirements contact your local [CUPA](#) online at http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/InformationResources/local_contacts.cfm or contact the [Department of Toxic Substances Control \(DTSC\)](#) at (800) 728-6942, http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/ContactDtsc/duty_officers.cfm

To get an EPA ID number, contact:

DTSC
Generator Information Services Unit
(916) 255-1136
(800) 618-6942

For additional information on auto body and paint shop pollution prevention practices and a list of available publications contact:

DTSC
Office of Pollution Prevention and Technology Development
P.O. Box 806
Sacramento, CA 95812-0806
(916) 322-3670
(800) 700-5854
<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/PollutionPrevention/index.cfm>

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